

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5524

S E C R E T MOSCOW 17889

NODIS

FOR USDEL SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)

SUBJECT: LETTER TO FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO FROM SECRETARY VANCE

REF: SECTO 120040

1. DURING A 55 MINUTE MEETING WITH GROMYKO STARTING AT NOON MONDAY, DEC. 12, I PRESENTED THE TEXT OF YOUR LETTER AS CONTAINED REFTEL. GROMYKO'S REACTION WAS PREDICTABLY SKEPTICAL, QUERULOUS AND UNHELPFUL ALTHOUGH HE DID SAY HE LOOKED FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU ON THE RESULTS OF YOUR CURRENT TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. CAREFULLY READING YOUR MESSAGE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, GROMYKO (WHO LOOKED PHYSICALLY FIT) SAID THAT IT TOUCHED ON A WHOLE SERIES OF QUESTIONS MANY OF WHICH WERE HIGHLY DISPUTABLE. HE REPEATED THAT, AS HE HAD TOLD HABIB, FEW PEOPLE IN THE WORLD COULD BELIEVE THAT THE SADAT TRIP AND THE IDEA OF THE CAIRO MEETING COULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITHOUT PRIOR USG KNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE SADAT TRIP AND THE CAIRO MEETING HE ASKED RHETORICALLY. DID THEY ACCORD WITH THE PLANS NURTURED BY THE US AND SOVIET CO-CHAIRMEN ON CONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, PLANS WHICH HAD MET THE SUPPORT OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF CONCERNED PARTIES? EMPHATICALLY NOT; SADAT AND BEGIN'S ACTIONS

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RAN DIRECTLY COUNTER TO THESE PLANS. AS FOR THE CAIRO MEETING, SADAT WAS TRYING TO SET HIMSELF ABOVE THE US AND SOVIET CO-CHAIRMEN. AND IT FOLLOWED THAT HAVING SAID "A" SADAT AND BEGIN WOULD GO ON TO SAY "B" (IMPLYING A SEPARATE DEAL). THE WHOLE AFFAIR WAS A "POLITICAL CAPRICE" WHICH THE US HAD WILLINGLY FOLLOWED, TRAILING IN THE WAKE OF SADAT AND BEGIN.

3. EVEN ASSUMING THAT A PRELIMINARY MEETING ON, SAY, PROCEDURAL MATTERS WAS DEEMED NECESSARY ASKED GROMYKO, WHY COULDN'T THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN HAVE HAD PRELIMINARY EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION? MAYBE THEY COULD HAVE AGREED ON SOMETHING. HOWEVER NOTHING ALONG THESE LINES HAD BEEN SUGGESTED BY THE US SIDE WHEN HE WAS LAST IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK. INSTEAD, MOSCOW LEARNED BY RADIO OF THE CAIRO MEETING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF WHICH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ANTI-SOVIET SALLIES. THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAD CAUSED AN ENORMOUS RIFT IN THE ARAB WORLD WHICH LED TO RETREATS FROM THE GENEVA CONCEPT, TRIGGERED THE TRIPOLI MEETING (ABOUT WHICH THE USSR DID NOT KNOW IN ADVANCE) AND PRODUCED RESULTS BEST DESCRIBED AS NULL OR EVEN NEGATIVE, FOR THE SITUATION WAS NOW WORSE.

4. MOSCOW REALLY WANTS TO SAVE GENEVA, SAID GROMYKO, BUT IT CAN'T. IF THE US AND OTHERS MAKE PRINCIPLED EFFORTS, ESPECIALLY TO INFLUENCE ISRAEL IN THE PROPER MANNER, MAYBE GENEVA CAN BE SAVED. AT PRESENT IT HAS BEEN EXPLODED, BURIED BEFORE IT TOOK PLACE, AND FOR THIS, AS HE HAD SAID TO HABIB, THE US BEARS HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY. THERE IS LITTLE HOPE FOR MIRACLES. OF COURSE HE WOULD AWAIT INFORMATION FROM SECY VANCE ON HIS MIDDLE EAST VISIT. BUT IF THE US, ISRAEL AND SADAT CONTINUE THEIR PRESENT POLICIES AND COURSES, THEN NOTHING AND NO ONE COULD SAVE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE

5. IN CONCLUSION GROMYKO SAID THAT BY TAKING ITS RECENT STEPS
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THE US ADMINISTRATION HAD IGNORED A GOLDEN RULE OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND DIPLOMACY; IT IS MUCH EASIER TO DESTROY THAN TO BUILD SOMETHING GOOD. THE GOOD WHICH WE HAD BUILT BY OUR JOINT ACTION WAS NOW DESTROYED.

6. IN REPLY I SAID I WOULD REPORT HIS PRELIMINARY REACTION TO YOU BUT I WAS UNHAPPY THAT HE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE POSITIVE. REGARDING HIS REPEATED COMMENT THAT ONLY A FEW PEOPLE IN THE WORLD DID NOT SUSPECT US PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND APPROVAL OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES YOUR MESSAGE HAD SET FORTH THE FACTS CLEARLY AND I COULD ONLY HOPE THAT HE WOULD COME TO ACCEPT THE EXPLANATION AS THE TRUTH. REGARDING THE CAIRO MEETING, I SAID I HAD LITTLE TO ADD EXCEPT TO REEMPHASIZE THAT IT WOULD BE A USEFUL STEP LEADING TO GENEVA AND THAT IT WAS BEST TO AWAIT THE RESULTS. MEANWHILE, I STRESSED, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS SADAT AND BEGIN SAID THEY FAVORED A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND WE SHOULD ACCEPT THEIR WORDS AT FACE VALUE. WE REGRETTED THE FACT THAT THE USSR WOULD NOT ATTEND THE CAIRO MEETING BUT OF COURSE THEY HAD MADE THEIR OWN DECISION AND WE WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT. MEANWHILE, I INSISTED, IT WAS WRONG TO ACCUSE US OF DEVIATING FROM THE JOINT STATEMENT. WE REMAIN STAUNCHLY FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND A GENEVA CONFERENCE.

WE HADN'T RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF A PRELIMINARY MEETING DURING HIS WASHINGTON/NEW YORK TALKS SIMPLY BECAUSE WE DIDN'T KNOW OF SADAT'S INTENDED MOVES AT THAT TIME. IN CLOSING I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD DO WHAT THEY COULD TO KEEP ALL PARTIES CONCERNED ON THE ROAD TO GENEVA.

7. GROMYKO SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO ADD AND ON THAT WE MOVED ON TO DISCUSS THE HORN OF AFRICA (SEPTTEL).
TOON

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